

P99-103 - StorAmerica Self Storage

- REQUEST:
- A. Environmental Determination: Exempt, Section 15301(g)
 - B. Variance to allow the alteration of an existing pole sign located within 660 feet of a freeway on 2.53± developed acres in the Heavy Commercial - Parkway Corridor - Richards Boulevard Special Planning District (C-4 -PC-SPD) zone.

LOCATION: 625 North 16th Street
APN: 001-0104-014
Central City Community Plan
Sacramento Unified School District
Council District 1

APPLICANT:	Trevor A. Jones, Delta Sign Company, (310) 246-3496 9350 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 400 Beverly Hills, CA 90212
OWNER:	Sacramento - 16 th Storage Associates 9350 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 400 Beverly Hills, CA 90212
APPLICATION FILED:	August 11, 1999
STAFF CONTACT:	Ted Kozak, 264-1944

SUMMARY/ RECOMMENDATION:

The applicant requests entitlements to allow the refacing of an existing 36.16' pole sign with 100 square foot canopy area to a 20' high, 96 square foot pole sign to reflect the recent change in ownership of the Mini Storage located at 625 North 16th Street. A Planning Commission Variance is required since the City Sign Ordinance does not allow pole signs or monument signs greater than 12 feet in height, or 24 square feet in area, within 660 feet of an area deemed a freeway. The State of California Department of Transportation deems State Highway 160 a freeway, including the affected portion of 16th Street. Typically, the resurfacing, alteration, or reduction of sign height or area, would not require Planning Commission approval; However, alteration or reconstruction of signs within the specified

distance of a freeway must undergo Planning Review, regardless of whether or not the existing sign is legally non-conforming. In evaluating the project, the basic issue is the suitability of allowing the alteration of an existing, legally non-conforming pole sign which exceeds the 12' height and 24 square foot canopy area limits.

The State of California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) is currently in the process of negotiating the transfer of State Highway 160 to the City of Sacramento. The effected parcel in about two years will likely not be located in an area deemed to be a freeway due to reclassification, according to Ron Hall, of CalTrans.

Staff recommends approval of the project, subject to conditions. This recommendation is based on the conclusion that this variance is appropriate due to the unusual conditions surrounding this property. The current owner would undergo undue hardship, suffer possible financial losses, and be in violation of the City Ordinance to require refacing of on-premise signs after a change in name, if the current sign was not permitted to be altered. The applicant stated economic reasons to justify the variance in a letter to staff, citing problems such as visibility, location, and low street grade (see attachment 4).

PROJECT INFORMATION:

General Plan Designation:	Richards Boulevard SPD
Community Plan Designation:	Service Commercial
Existing Land Use of Site:	Industrial
Existing Zoning of Site:	C-4-PC-SPD

Surrounding Land Use and Zoning:

North: Industrial; C-4-PC-SPD
 South: Commercial; C-4-PC-SPD
 East: Industrial; C-4-PC-SPD
 West: Vacant CDOT land; C-4-PC-SPD

Property Dimensions:	irregular
Property Area:	2.53+ gross acres
Square Footage of Sign Canopy:	96 square feet
Height of Sign:	20 feet
Topography:	Flat
Street Improvements:	Existing
Utilities:	Existing

OTHER APPROVALS REQUIRED: In addition to the entitlements requested, the applicant will also need to obtain the following permits or approvals, including, but not limited to:

Permit
Building Permit

Agency
Building Division

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On May 5, 1977, the City Building Department approved the construction of a 30' high pole sign with 100 square foot canopy area (Permits S-8935 and S-8936) in conjunction with the construction of the Mini Storage located at 625 North 16th Street. There is no record of any planning review or design review at the time. In the summer of 1999, the applicant purchased the aforementioned site and changed the name of the business from Mini U Storage to StorAmerica. The applicant now wishes to reface the current sign and reduce the height and sign area in a effort to renew the sign's appearance and reflect the name change on the pole sign.

STAFF EVALUATION: Staff has the following comments:

A. Policy Considerations

The City's Sign Ordinance (Section 3.12.192) requires a variance to alter an on-site sign within six hundred sixty (660) feet of the exterior right-of-way line of any portion of a freeway or route of a freeway which has been adopted by the State Highway Commission, if the copy of such on-site sign is visible by persons traveling on those portions of the freeway within six hundred sixty (660) feet of the sign.

The City Zoning Ordinance's Parkway Corridor Overlay has guidelines governing height requirements with respect to the linear distance from the levee to the base of the sign. The City of Sacramento's Sign Ordinance determines the "reference line" to be parallel to and ten feet landward from the landside toe of the levee. The Ordinance states that the height of any altered sign shall not exceed by more than five feet the difference between the elevation of the finished grade of the sign site and the elevation of that portion of the levee crown closest to the sign site. However, the maximum height permitted may be increased by one foot for each five feet the distance from the reference line exceeds 25 feet. In this case, the sign is 487.67± feet from the levee (See attachment 5), exceeding the distance of 100 feet required for a sign 20 feet in height. The project is consistent with the Parkway Corridor guidelines since the height of the sign will be low enough not to negatively effect any natural sightlines within the Parkway Corridor.

PROJECT REVIEW PROCESS:

A. Environmental Determination

The proposed project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to State EIR Guidelines (CEQA Section 15301(g)). No review is required since the project includes a new copy for an existing on-premise sign.

B. Public/Neighborhood/Business Association Comments

1. Capital Station District (CSD)

On September 28, 1999, staff contacted Connie Miotiel, from the Capital Station District, in order to receive her comments regarding the project. Ms. Miotiel stated that although the CSD is concerned about the "blight" around the project area and would like to see a monument sign no higher than 12 feet high, she concedes that the repair and refacing of the current sign is not only required by City Ordinance, but is a better alternative to the current aging sign.

C. Summary of Agency Comments

The project has been reviewed by several City Departments and other agencies. The following summarizes the comments received:

1. Design Review

Luis Sanchez, from the City's Design Review Team, supports the alteration of the sign since the applicant has proposed to reduce both the sign and canopy area. The sign is not what Design Review staff prefers in two respects: (1) The sign is higher than the 12 feet allowed for a sign located close to a freeway; and (2) The sign face includes a phone number. However, he states since it is only a reface and it is being reduced in height by over 16 feet, the current proposal is an acceptable alternative.

2. Downtown Redevelopment Department

Paul Blumberg, from the City's Downtown Department, supports the reduction of the height and sign area and says he can support the project.

3. State of California Department of Transportation

Staff phoned Ron Hall of the State of California Department of Transportation on September 14, 1999 to determine the status of the property in relation to its distance from the portion of State Highway 160 recognized as a freeway. In this discussion, there were three reference points given to help determine this distance. First, the State determines the freeway to begin 0.345 miles or 1,822

feet from the center line of the intersection of North C Street and North 16th Street. Second, the State determines the freeway to begin 30 feet north of the center line of the road located at the intersection of Richards Boulevard and North 16th Street. Third, the State determines the freeway to begin approximately 1/10th of a mile or 528 feet south of the bridge spanning the American river (the subject property is approximately 800 to 1,000 feet from the bridge). Using any of these definitions, the subject site is within 660 feet of an area the State deems as freeway.

PROJECT APPROVAL PROCESS: Of the entitlements below, Planning Commission has the authority to approve or deny item B. The Planning Commission action may be appealed to the City Council. The appeal must occur within 10 days of the Planning Commission action.

Staff recommends the Planning Commission take the following actions:

- A. Adopt the attached Notice of Decision and Findings of Fact which finds that the project is Exempt pursuant to CEQA Section 15301(g);
- B. Adopt the attached Notice of Decision and Findings of Fact approving the variance to allow the alteration of an existing pole sign located within 660 feet of a freeway on 2.53± developed acres in the Heavy Commercial - Parkway Corridor - Richards Boulevard Special Planning District (C-4 -PC- SPD) zone.

Report Prepared By,

Report Reviewed By,



Ted Kozak, Junior Planner



Steve Peterson, Senior Planner

Attachments

Attachment 1	Notice of Decision & Findings of Fact
Exhibit 1A	Site Plan
Exhibit 1B	Canopy Face
Exhibit 1C	Sign Detail
Exhibit 1D	Existing Sign
Attachment 2	Vicinity Map
Attachment 3	Land Use & Zoning Map
Attachment 4	Letter from applicant
Attachment 5	Sign Location Survey

**NOTICE OF DECISION AND FINDINGS OF FACT FOR
StorAmerica Self Storage, LOCATED AT 625 North 16th Street SACRAMENTO,
CALIFORNIA IN THE ZONE. (P99-103)**

At the regular meeting of October 28, 1999, the City Planning Commission heard and considered evidence in the above entitled matter. Based on verbal and documentary evidence at said hearing, the Planning Commission took the following actions for the location listed above:

- A. Environmental Determination, Exempt as per Section 15301(g);**
- B. Approved the Variance to allow the alteration of an existing pole sign located within 660 feet of a freeway on 2.53± developed acres in the Heavy Commercial - Parkway Corridor - Richards Boulevard Special Planning District (C-4 -PC- SPD) zone.**

These actions were made based upon the following findings of fact and subject to the following conditions:

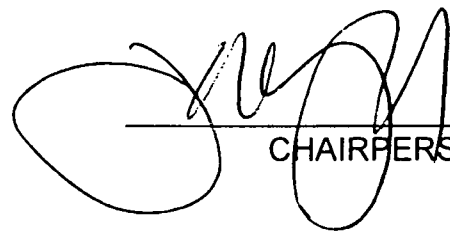
FINDINGS OF FACT

- A. Categorical Exemption: The City Planning Commission finds and determines that the proposed project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15301(g) of the CEQA Guidelines.
- B. Variance to allow the alteration of an existing pole sign located within 660 feet of a freeway on 2.53± developed acres in the Heavy Commercial - Parkway Corridor - Richards Boulevard Special Planning District (C-4 -PC- SPD) zone: The Variance to allow the alteration of an existing pole sign is subject to the following findings of fact:
 - 1. Granting the variance does not constitute a special privilege extended to an individual property owner in that variances would be granted to other property owners facing similar circumstances;
 - 2. Granting the variance would not be detrimental to the public welfare and not result in the creation of a public nuisance in that the refaced pole sign will be much lower in height than the existing one;
 - 3. Granting the variance does not constitute a use variance in that mini storage uses are allowed in the Heavy Commercial (C-4) zone; and

- 4. The project is consistent with the General Plan and Central City Community Plan which designate the site for Service Commercial land use.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

- B. The Variance to allow the alteration of an existing pole sign located within 660 feet of a freeway on 2.53± developed acres in the Heavy Commercial - Parkway Corridor - Richards Boulevard Special Planning District (C-4-PC-SPD) zone is approved:
 - B1. The applicant shall obtain all necessary building permits prior to construction.
 - B2. If there is a change in the way the sign, including canopy face, is to be altered, the applicant must come back for further Planning Review.
 - B3. Structural modifications to the existing sign pole, except for the reduction of height, is not permitted.
 - B4. The altered pole sign is to be no higher than 20 feet above grade from the tallest point of the sign canopy, to the base of the sign.
 - B5. Landscaping and turf must be returned to pre-construction form immediately upon the completion of the project.



CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:

Guy L. Stanchura
 SECRETARY TO CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
10-29-99
 DATE (P99-103)

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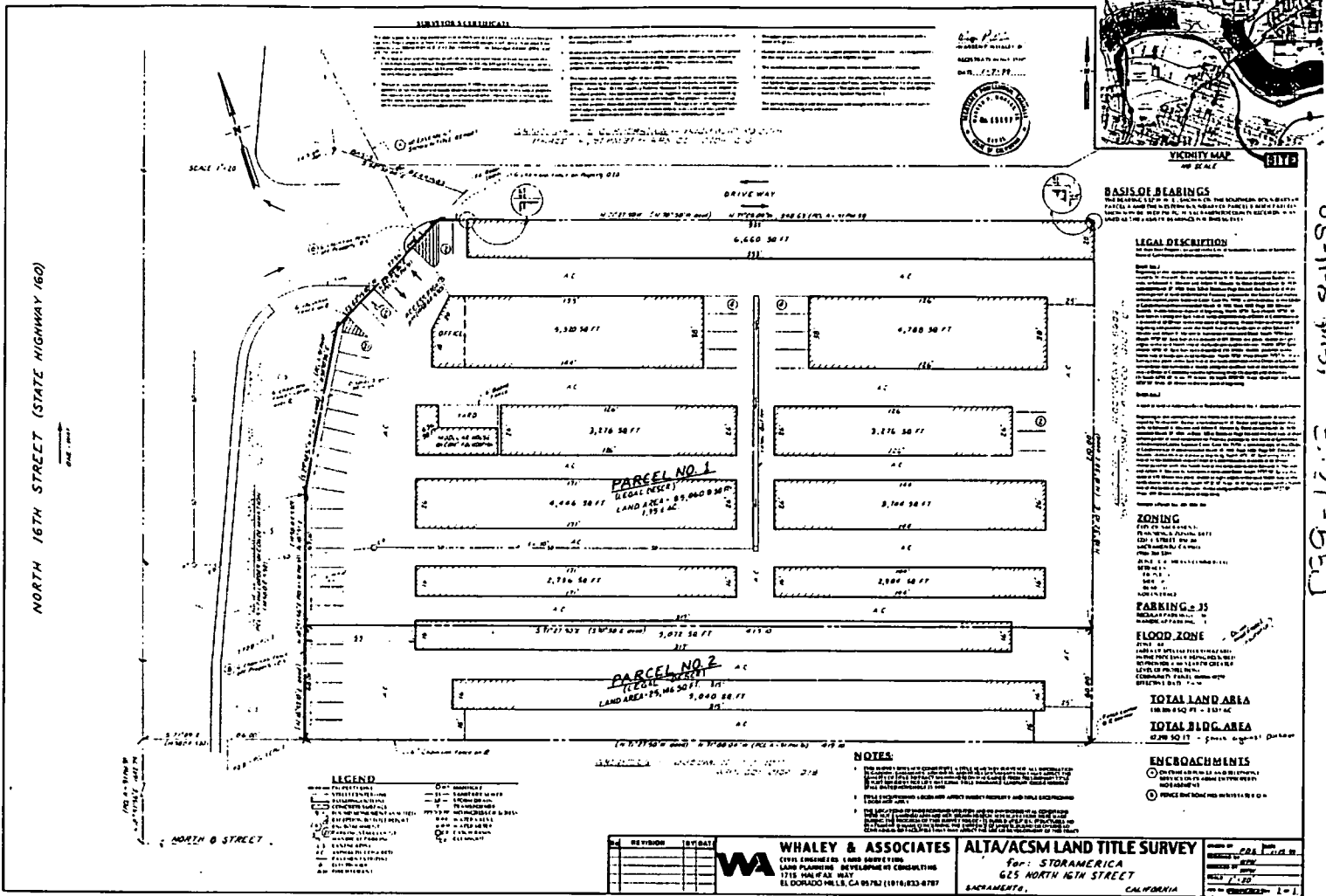
CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:

SECRETARY TO CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE (P99-103)

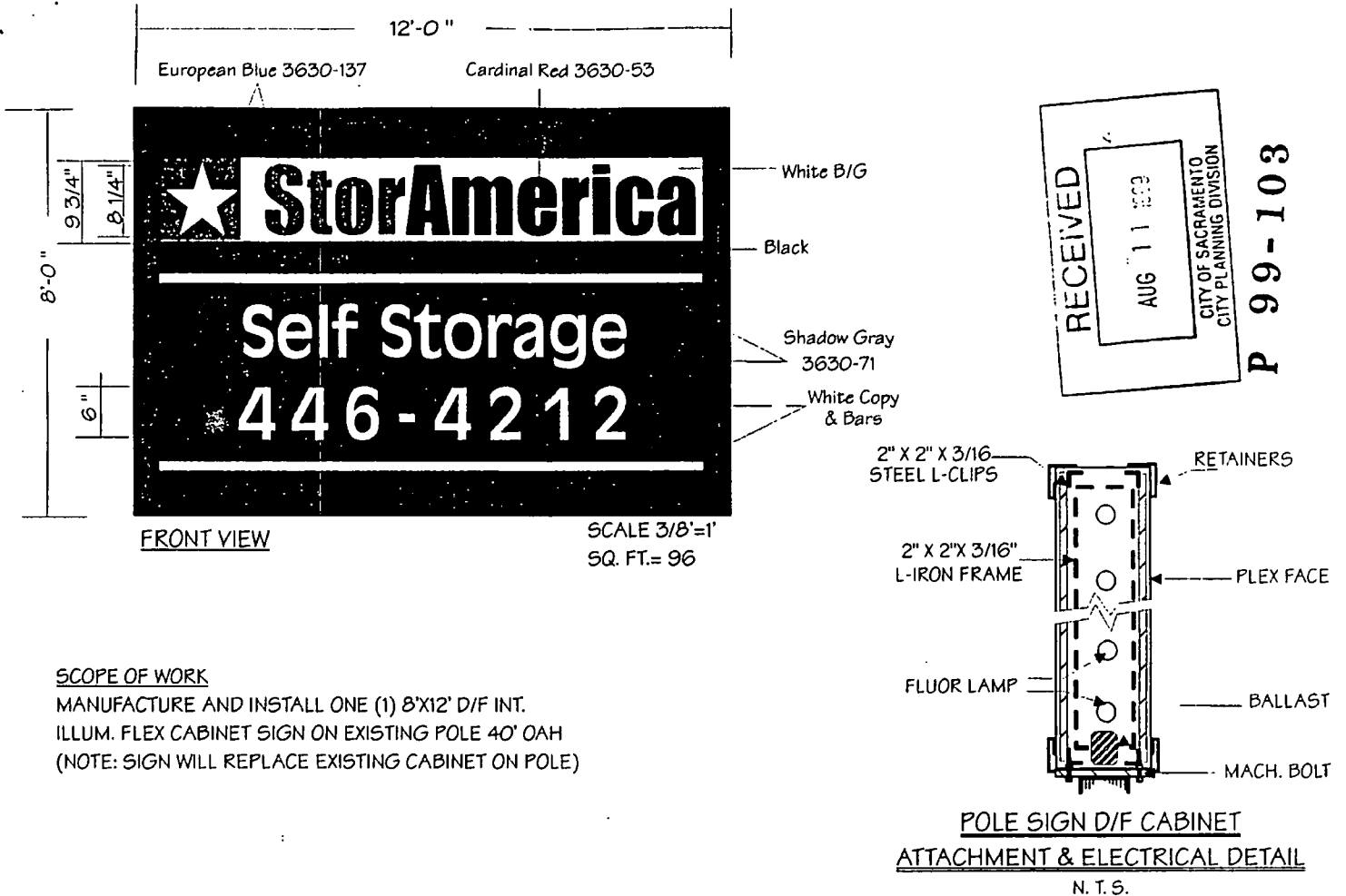
Exhibit 1A



89-118 and 89-11-99
S-21-651

Site Plan

Exhibit 1B



SCOPE OF WORK

MANUFACTURE AND INSTALL ONE (1) 8'X12' D/F INT.
ILLUM. FLEX CABINET SIGN ON EXISTING POLE 40' OAH
(NOTE: SIGN WILL REPLACE EXISTING CABINET ON POLE)

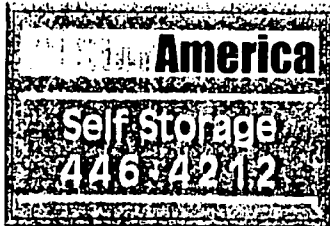
DATE 5/28/99	PROJECT NAME STORAMERICA	VALUE \$4,300	CUSTOMER APPROVAL
SCALE N/A	ADDRESS 625 NORTH 16TH STREET	UL AW-883827	LANDLORD APPROVAL
DRAWN BY I. HARRIS	CITY/STATE SACRAMENTO, CA	SALESPERSON C. HUFFMAN	DRAWING NUMBER 1 OF 2

delta SIGNS 2100 Sanguinetti Lari
Stockton, CA 95205
(209) 948-1713
Fax (209) 948-8826

NOTE: This is an original unpublished drawing created by Delta Signs. It is submitted for your personal use in connection with a project being planned for you by Delta Signs. It is to be shown to anyone outside your firm. If drawings or designs are used, there is a charge no less than \$250.00.

Canopy Face

Exhibit 1C



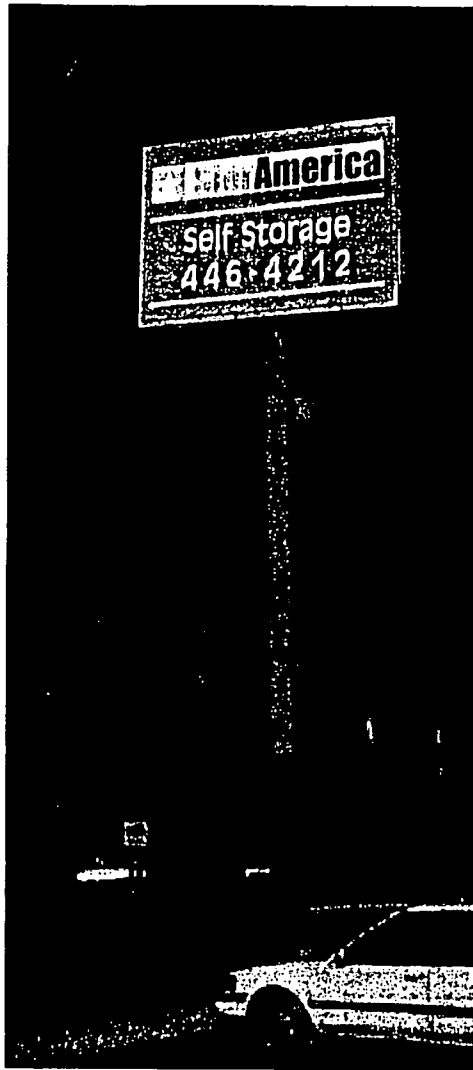
20 feet

10"

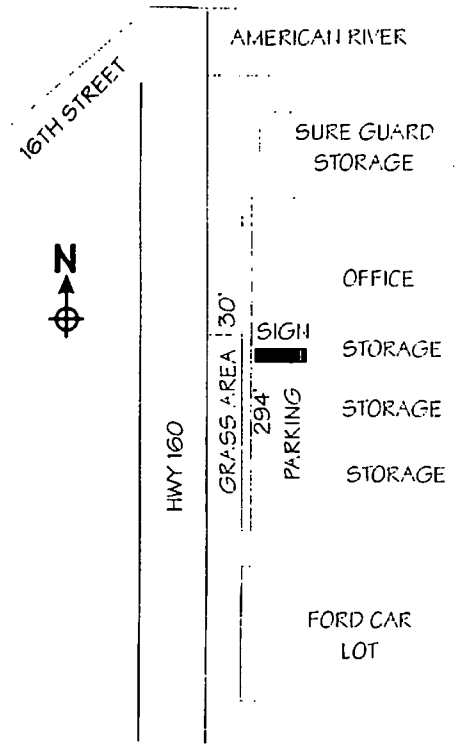
12"

9'-3"

SCALE 3/16"=1'



SIGN ELEVATION



SITE PLAN

N.T.S. (PROPERTY FRONTAGE=294')

P 99-103

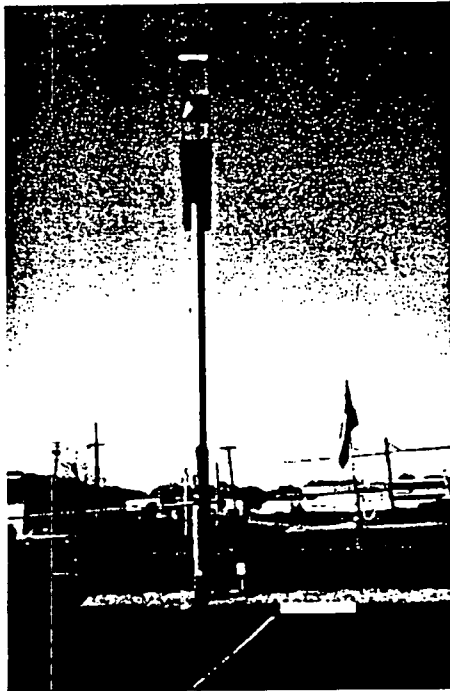
AUG 11 RECD



2100 Sanginetti Lane
Stockton, CA 95205
(209) 948-1713
Fax (209) 948-8826

Sign Detail

Exhibit 1D



EXISTING PYLON SIGN

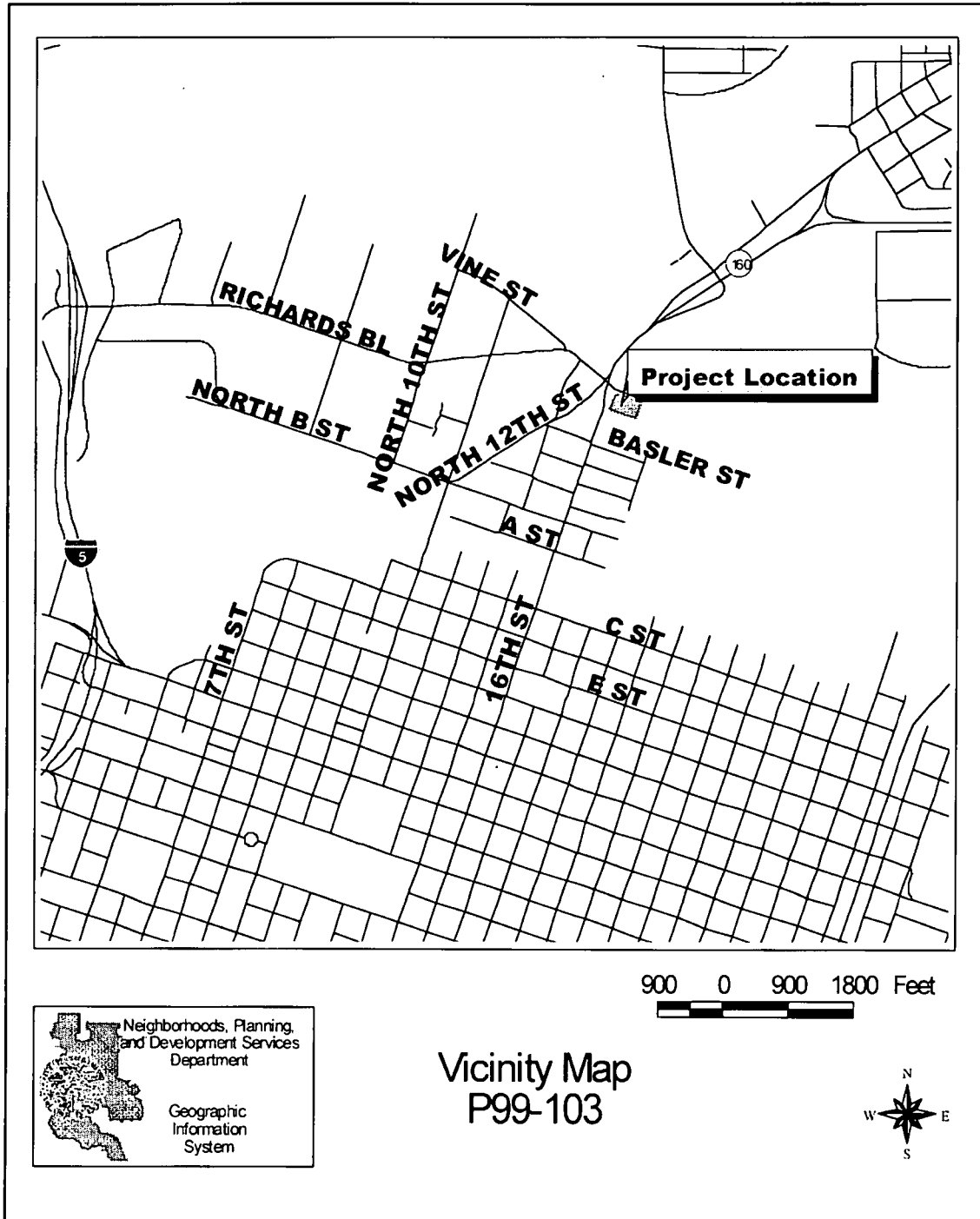


STORAMERICA
625 NORTH 16TH STREET
SACRAMENTO, CA

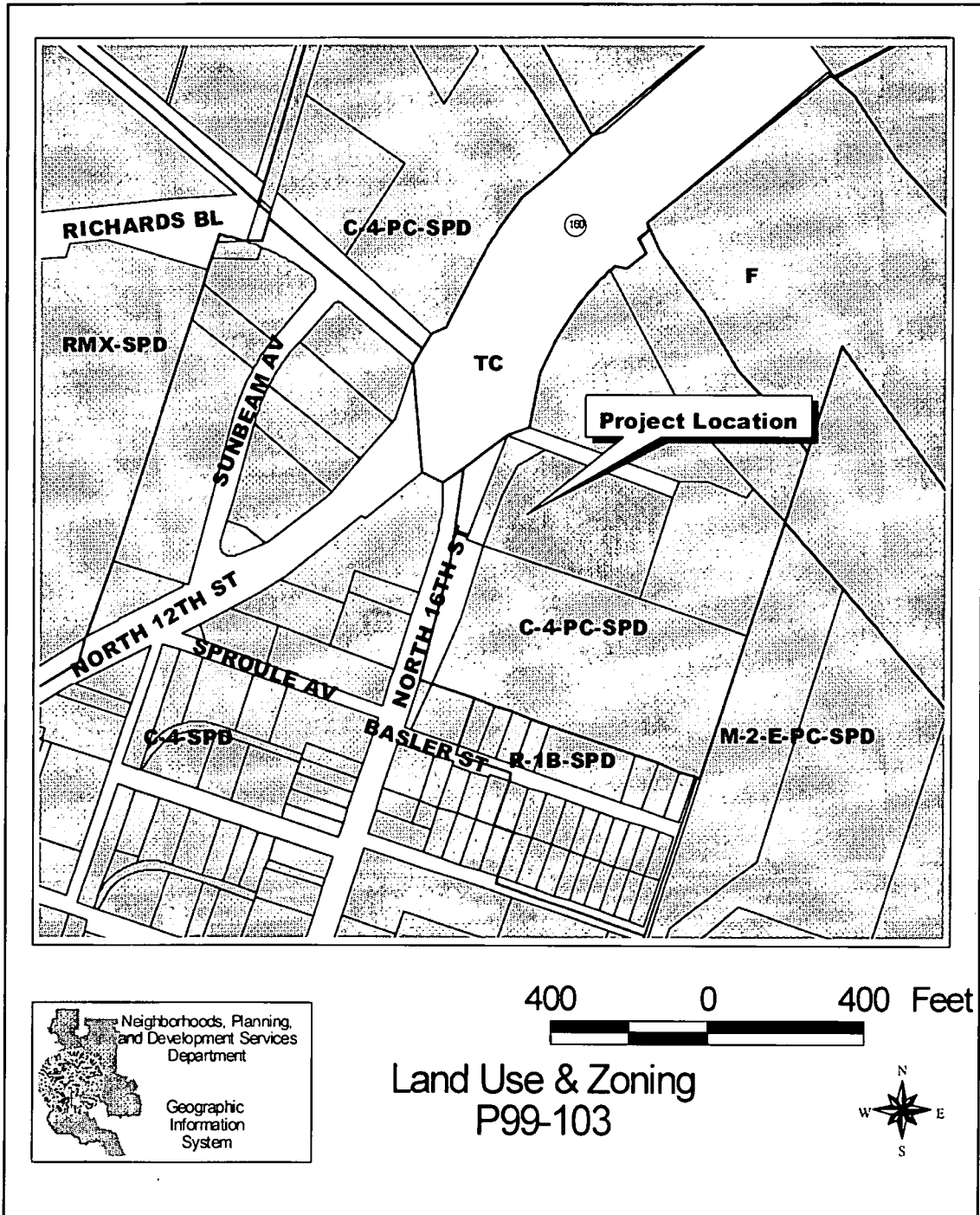
P 99-103
AUG 2 1 1999

Existing Sign

Attachment 2



Attachment 3



Attachment 4

INFORMATION AND REASONING JUSTIFYING REQUEST

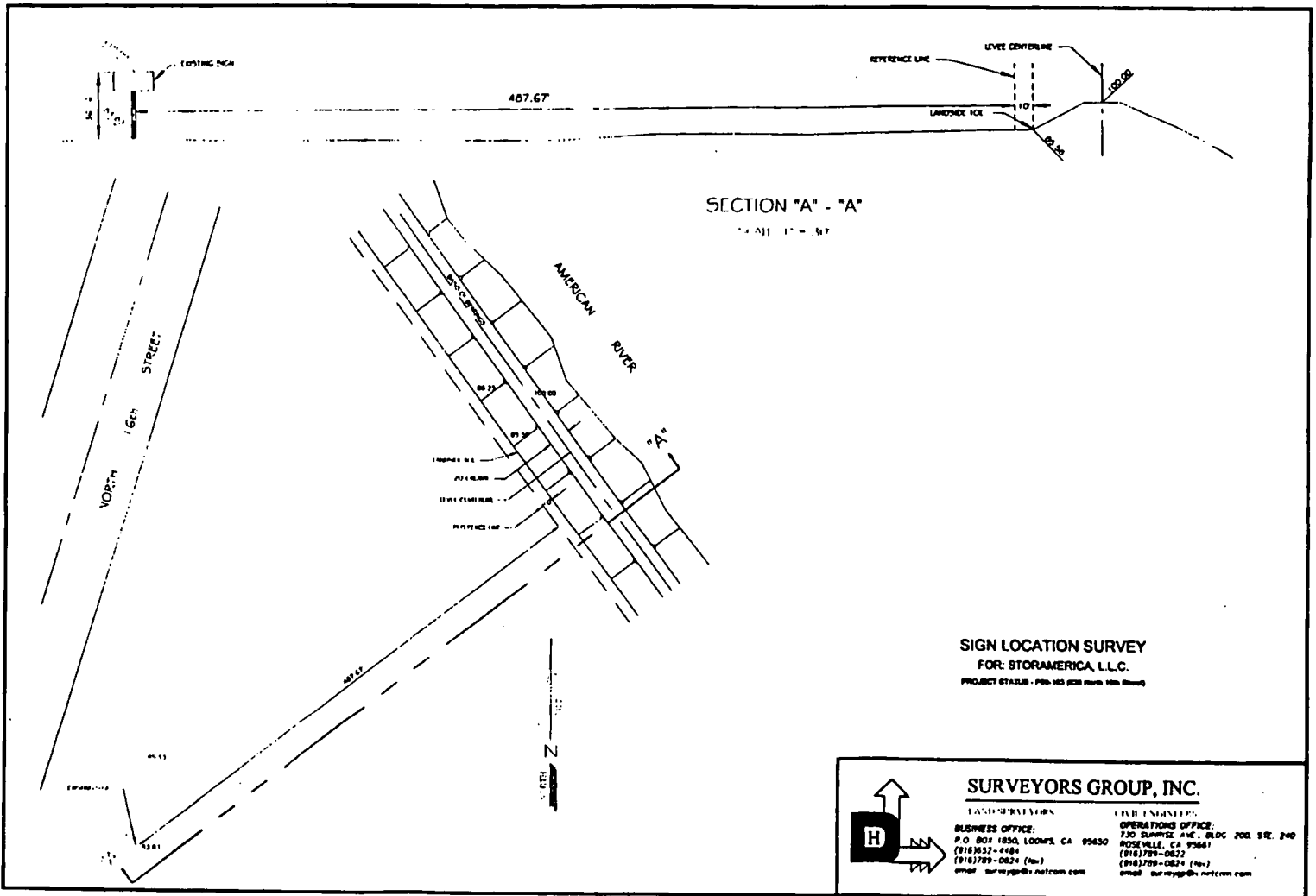
StorAmerica's reasoning is purely economic. Not having a pole sign will have an immediate and long lasting impact on our ability to rent to new tenants. It will all but eliminate our ability to attract drive-by tenants, and make it extremely difficult for arriving new tenants to find our location. The pole sign is needed for the following reasons:

- StorAmerica and National Self Storage share a driveway off of 16th Street. National has much greater visibility from 16th Street traffic than StorAmerica because of the following:
 - Visibility to our site is restricted by the trees along 16th Street and the many signs on the City Ford property. A prospective tenant cannot see our property until they have already come upon it. National's visibility is not obstructed. The CDOT land (270' long) is mostly mowed grass and provides perfect visibility to National's property.
 - StorAmerica's property is landlocked (essentially a flag lot) by an 86' wide strip of CDOT land.
 - StorAmerica's property lies well below street grade. There is a row of shrubs approximately 4' high in front of a new 7' high wrought iron fence. A monument sign would barely be seen, if at all.
 - National Self Storage has a pole sign.
- Public Storage is just two blocks to the south. Public Storage has great visibility from their corner location. They recently re-faced their pole signs as the company went through a corporate re-imaging that involved new colors.

If StorAmerica was located on 16th Street, a monument sign would be sufficient. There is 86 feet of land and a grade differential separating us from the street. Our occupancy level is already about 10% less than both National Self Storage and Public Storage as of June 30th. Not allowing us to have a pole sign will hurt our marketing efforts further.

Letter from Applicant

Attachment 5



Sign Location Survey